

America's capacity for technological innovation has long given us the strongest economy and military on earth, but this advantage is not a given; it must be nurtured and maintained. To that end, this year's NDAA authorizes significant funding increases for cutting-edge technologies like microelectronics, hypersonic weapons, and low-cost unmanned aircraft. Similarly, it increases funding to support U.S. Cyber Command's Hunt Forward Operations and artificial intelligence capabilities.

And, as we navigate threats of nuclear escalation from Russia and increasing capabilities from China, the NDAA enhances our deterrence strategy by helping to modernize the U.S. nuclear triad. It makes progress toward ensuring the security of our nuclear stockpile, delivery systems, and infrastructure; increasing capacity in missile defense; and strengthening non-proliferation programs.

This bill was originally crafted by the Armed Services Committee after a series of thoughtful hearings, discussions, and debates on both sides of the aisle. Through the committee markup process, we considered more than 443 amendments and ultimately adopted 233 of them. Senator INHOFE and I introduced this bill to the full Senate with the intent of adding more amendments on the floor. Although we were not able to come to hold debate on the floor, we were ultimately able to adopt amendments from Senators on both sides of the aisle in the final legislation, including several major authorization bills from other committees.

Over the past several weeks, the Senate and House Armed Services Committees have worked around the clock to come to an agreement on this final version. I am proud of the improvements we made throughout this process, and I was pleased to see the House vote last week in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion, 350-80, to pass the bill. We have produced a strong NDAA that both parties, both Chambers, and the President will be able to sign.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the phenomenal staff who made this bill possible. There are dozens of staff across the committees and floor who worked tirelessly to bring us to this point, and we are all immensely grateful for their dedication. I will submit each of their names for the record. I want to specifically recognize the director for the Armed Services Democratic staff, Elizabeth King, and the director for the Republican staff, John Wason. They have led their staffs admirably and collaborated with bipartisan spirit, diligence, and skill.

I would also like to thank members of the Armed Services Committee staff: Jody Bennett, Carolyn Chuhta, Jon Clark, Jenny Davis, Jonathan Epstein, Jorie Feldman, Kevin Gates, Creighton Greene, Gary Leeling, Kirk McConnell, Maggie McNamara Cooper, Bill Monahan, Mike Noblet, John Quirk, Andy Scott, Cole Stevens, Brittany

Amador, Patrick Shilo, Alison Warner, Leah Brewer, Megan Lustig, Joe Gallo, Chad Johnson, Jessica Lewis, Griffin Cannon, Brandon Kasprick, Sofia Kamali, Vannary Kong, and, once again, staff director Elizabeth King.

Let me conclude by once again thanking Ranking Member INHOFE, Chairman SMITH, and Ranking Member ROGERS for working thoughtfully and on a bipartisan basis to develop this important piece of legislation.

Finally, I thank my colleagues for voting in favor of this excellent bill.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, after months of deliberating, just like that, the most important bill we work on every year has passed the Senate.

There is an old document that no one reads anymore called the Constitution. It tells us what we are supposed to be doing here: providing for our national defense. That is why Congress has passed a Defense authorization bill for 61 years in a row. This year will be No. 62. I am proud to have been involved in quite a few of those.

Just like prior years, Republicans and Democrats came together and made compromises on the many provisions in this bill. And it is a good thing we did because we face threats like I have never seen before in my life. We have got a bill that addresses many of these threats and helps provide our military with all the tools needed to do their jobs.

This bill includes a significant topline increase and provides a blueprint for where we need to invest to deter China. It fully supports our nuclear modernization program. It also takes the first step to restoring America as the Arsenal of Democracy by expanding munitions production. It includes multiple provisions that strengthen America's frontline partners, including Ukraine and Taiwan. We continue to take care of service-members, including by repealing the COVID vaccine mandate and strengthening parents' rights at DOD schools. It is also important to note that we kept poison pills out of the final text that could have jeopardized passage of this critical bill. This is a good bill. It is not the bill I would have written on my own, but I am proud to vote for it today.

Lastly, I would like to thank a few people who put in a ton of work on the NDAA. That starts with Chairman REED, who has been a great partner and friend. I would like to thank the Armed Services Committee staff, who have worked tirelessly to make this bill a reality, including the majority staff director, Liz King.

On my staff, there are many who have had a hand in crafting this bill. They worked the late nights and early mornings to make sure we had a bill to vote on today. First on that list is my Republican staff director, John Wason. John has been serving this country his entire life, first in the U.S. Army, then at the House Armed Services Committee, and now here in the Senate.

None of this would be possible without his leadership.

On the minority staff for the committee, I want to thank:

Rick Berger
Scott Richardson
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Jennie Wright
Adam Barker
Kristina Belcourt
Allen Edwards
Katie Magnus
Sean O'Keefe
Brad Patout
Jason Potter
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Bennett Crow
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Laurie Fitch
Lauren Pickett
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Laura Hill, and
Richard Balzano

And the hard-working floor staff:

Robert Duncan
Chris Tuck
Tony Hanagan
Katherine Foster
Brian Canfield
Max Boyd
Maddie Sanborn
Charlotte Ueland, and
Noelle Ringel

I am very grateful for all of their service.

As I finish my time here in the Senate, I can leave knowing that we have done all we can to support our troops for another year and we have succeeded.

DIRECTING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF THE BILL H.R. 7776

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, H. Con. Res. 121 is considered and agreed to, and the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 121) was agreed to.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2023—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is now the message with respect to H.R. 1437.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to